

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LAND USE PLAN**

#### **A. THE ROLE OF THE LAND USE PLAN**

This chapter focuses on the preparation of a land use plan for the City of Hopewell. A land use plan is that component of a comprehensive plan that establishes the broad framework for managing future growth and change. It does so by:

1. Designating areas of the City for various types of development and use.
2. Establishing land use and development policies that represent the City's vision for the future use and or development of land within each area.

In describing the comprehensive plan, and that portion which addresses the land use plan, the Virginia Code (§ 15.2-2223) reads, in part, as follows:

“The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.”

“The plan, with accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendation for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to: (1) The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas...”

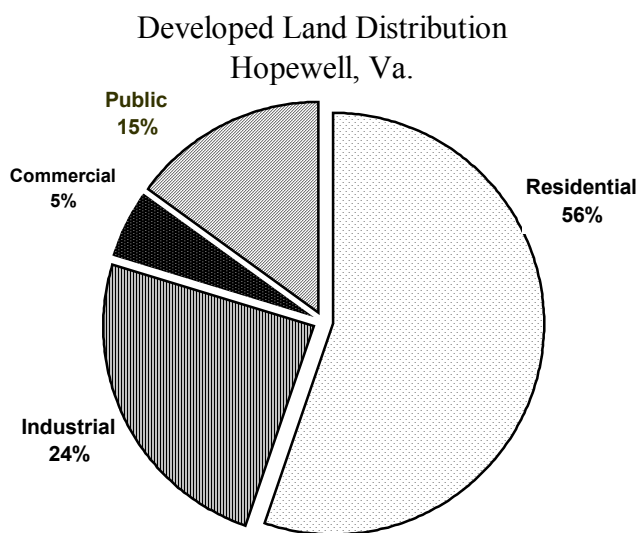
While the language of the law covers other elements of the comprehensive plan including public facilities, historic preservation, ground water protection, and more, the underlined portion of the preceding paragraph broadly defines what the land use plan is intended to do. In addition to containing a land use plan map that designates various classifications of land use, it also includes a set of general land use and development policies and/or strategies for guiding development within each land use category shown on the land use plan.

Once the governing body has adopted the land use element of the comprehensive plan, it serves several functions. One of the most important of these is to provide the vision that community leaders have concerning the future development and use of land within the community. It is important that there be a consensus within the community so that the vision set out in the plan has wide public support. After adoption when the plan has received official approval, the land use plan and the policies expressed therein are then used to guide public and private decisions on proposals that come before the government.

Another function of the land use plan is to provide a foundation for developing updating, or changing the requirements of land use regulations. Numerous court challenges are made each year to local decisions to “change” or “not change” zoning districts or other regulations. In many of these cases, the language of policies stated in the comprehensive plan, particularly those in the land use plan, influences their final outcomes. Land use regulations that are based on a well-reasoned land use plan and policies enhance the probability of successfully defending local decisions. While the land use plan is but one of several components of the comprehensive plan, it is the most indispensable element with regard to establishing regulations to manage physical growth. Its “broad-brush” policies are used as a basis for formulating specific regulations such as zoning, subdivision regulations and other land development tools.

For many years, Hopewell has faced the situation of trying to grow without having enough vacant land. By 1990 all but about 22 percent of the land area within the corporate boundary had been occupied by some urban use. Excluding land that was used for streets and railroads, the remaining developed land was distributed as shown in the adjacent chart.

Little has happened to change those numbers since that data were



compiled, except to reduce the amount of vacant land even more by a modest amount of development. In addition to that, much of the land that is now vacant is greatly encumbered because of severe physical conditions, or because it falls within the Chesapeake Bay regulated areas. About 400 acres occupied by the Resource Protection Area are included in the buffer area and steep slopes along stream banks. A larger area qualifies under the Chesapeake Bay Regulations as the Resource Management Area (RMA) although as of this analysis (February 2001) the City of Hopewell had not officially delineated the RMA. The latter area consists of 100-year flood plains, highly erodible soils and other environmentally sensitive areas. While development is permitted within the RMA, it must be managed with considerable care in order to comply with the Chesapeake Bay zoning regulations that were adopted by the City in September 1990. In summary, of the land reported as vacant only about 1200 acres are classified as developable and that is less than 17 percent of the total city area. It may therefore be concluded that Hopewell's supply of vacant land is far below what is needed to support vigorous urban growth.

One authority on land use planning<sup>1</sup> offers the general rule that in order to provide a flexibility factor for growth over a future planning period that vacant land should comprise roughly 25 percent of the urban planning area. Chapin states that *“such a flexibility factor allows for deviant choices of individuals and firms who may acquire land in excess of the estimated need, and it allows for land which may be held out of use because of personal preferences or whims of a few property owners or because of legal complications which make the land unavailable for immediate development.”*

The situation in Hopewell certainly supports this general observation. Because of this shortage of vacant land that is suitable for development and barring prospects for annexing additional land in the near future, Hopewell's opportunity for new development is very limited. The primary focus of additional development will therefore be on two strategies: (1) managing the development of the small amount of vacant land that remains; and (2) infill of random vacant lots located throughout the City. Replacement of obsolete uses with higher and better uses must also be part of this strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., Urban Land Use Planning, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, University of Illinois Press, 1972., p. 385.

## **B LAND USE PLAN FRAMEWORK**

### **1. Functional Divisions**

The Land Use Plan that is presented below divides the City into two types of physical areas. One of these that might be called “functional divisions” partitions the City into geographic areas according to major development characteristics. While these areas overlap each other to some extent, each sub-area has certain characteristics in common that warrant special recognition in land use planning. Three functional divisions are identified as follows:

The Urban Core - defines that part of the older city that was substantially built up prior to and immediately following World War II. It is roughly defined by Cabin Creek Road, South Mesa Drive, Courthouse Road, Cattail Creek and the eastern leg of the Norfolk and Western Railroad. This area includes three sub areas – residential areas, central business district and the Route 36 commercial strip corridor but excludes the area immediately around the I-295/Oaklawn intersection.

The Industrial Area – which encompasses the industrial establishment located in the eastern part of the City is bounded by Cattail Creek, the Norfolk and Western Railroad, and the eastern city limits. This area contains almost the entire industrial complex of Hopewell.

The Perimeter – is the area in the western and southern part of the City that lies outside the urban core first described above. This area roughly approximates the area of the 1969 annexation and is comprised mostly of residential development and vacant land except that it includes the commercial complex near the I-295/Oaklawn Boulevard interchange. While much of the vacant land remaining within Hopewell is located in this area, it is also the area that is the most constrained because of topography, wetlands, and other areas with severe development constraints.

### **2. Land Use Classifications**

The second type of area used to portray the Land Use Plan is built around the major classes of land use, more particularly: residential, commercial, industrial and public areas. There are five types of areas within this group.

Residential areas – cover the broad range of residential uses and densities found within Hopewell. The dominant forms are single-family houses on separate lots although there are numerous apartment complexes located randomly throughout the residential area.

Commercial areas – include: (a) the Central Business District (CBD); and (b) commercial development along State Route 36 from the CBD to where it meets the commercial complex around the I-295 Interchange.

Industrial areas – incorporates the entire eastern portion of the City from the Norfolk and Western Railroad and Cattail Creek to the eastern city limits. In this case the industrial area on the land use map is the same area as defined in the preceding “functional areas.”

Public areas – include a variety of public and some semi-public lands from school sites, recreational areas, John Randolph Hospital, churches and other similar uses.

Special areas – supplement the land use plan with supplementary considerations that provide adjustments to the policies and strategies of the primary land use areas identified above. These include: (a) historic preservation areas and (b) the Chesapeake Bay RPAs and RMAs.

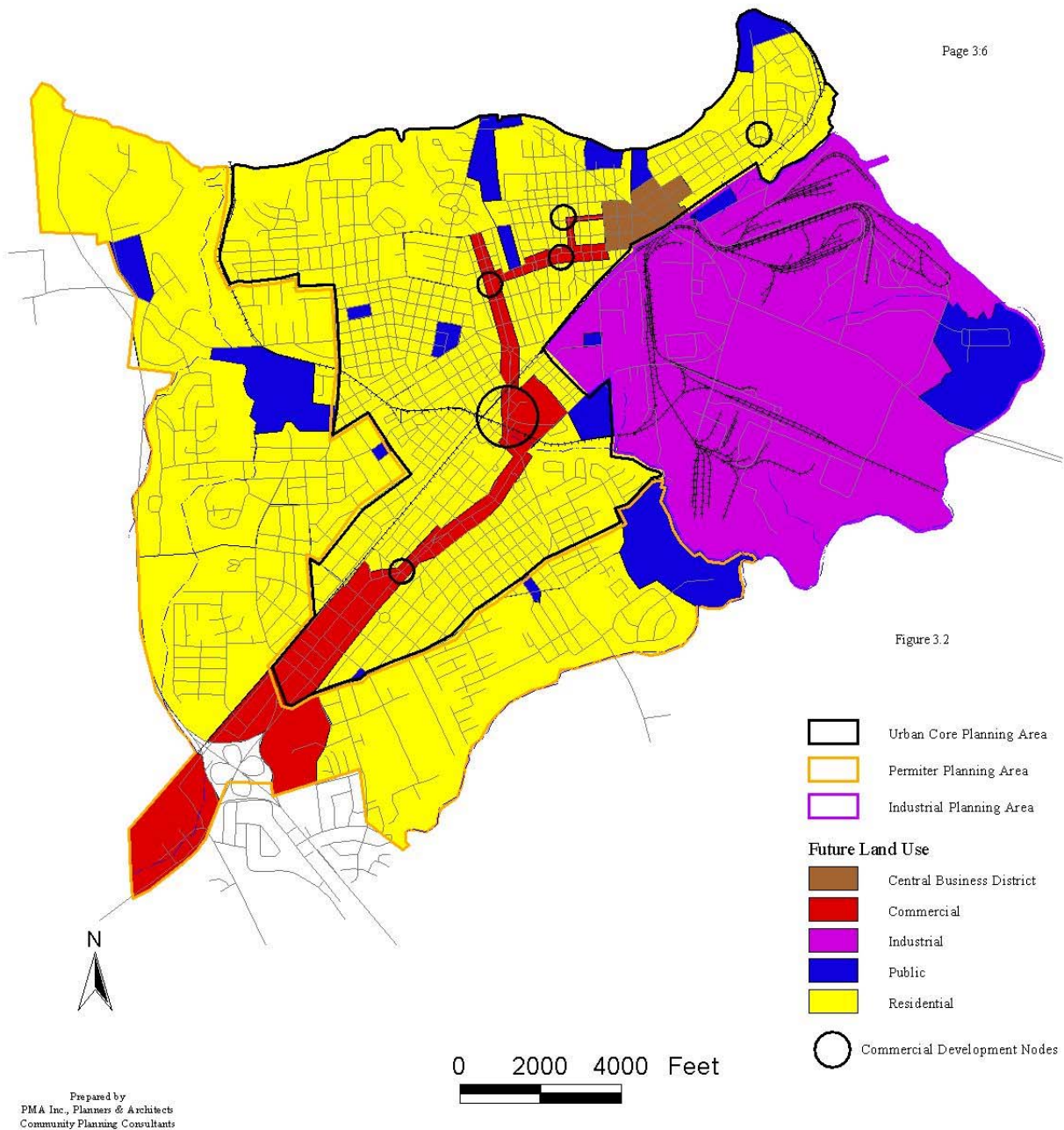
## C. THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN (MAP)

The future Land Use Plan for Hopewell consists of two components, a land use plan map and a set of land use policies and/or strategies. This section presents the plan in the form of a map. (Figure 3.2). Land use policies/strategies are presented in Section D below. Both the Land Use Plan Map and the Land Use Policies are designed to work together as a single plan. Together they provide the broad umbrella for managing spatial development within the City and the policy directives for establishing tools and other actions for implementing the plan. It is formed by applying to the City as a whole the four major classes of land use – industrial, residential, commercial and public - as defined above. Land Use policies are presented in the same format but organized according to the three major divisions of the city, that is the industrial area, urban core and perimeter as identified in the previous section.

### 1. Industrial Areas

The industrial area on the Land Use Plan is a large contiguous area occupying the eastern portion of the City. The area can accommodate, subject to the limitations previously discussed, almost any kind of industry that is acceptable to the City. It is the policy of the City to exclude residential uses of all types from the industrial area.

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## 2. Commercial Areas

Commercial districts within an urban area may, in general, be classified as (a) regional trade centers, (b) community retail centers or (c) neighborhood commercial facilities. While in practice the line between one type and the other is often blurred, there are certain characteristics that are present in the commercial structure of Hopewell that bear a resemblance to these hypothetical classes. For example:

### a. Regional Trade Centers

These trade centers have concentrations of major retail businesses and other businesses such as banks, governmental centers and the like. In addition to serving the resident population, these centers attract trade from beyond the City Limits and in so doing help increase the wealth of the City by bringing outside dollars into the local economic system. Regional trade centers require locations where streets are capable of carrying large volumes of vehicles; therefore, access and parking are important. There are two areas within Hopewell that have some or all of the characteristics of Regional Centers.

- The Central Business District (CBD) is the historic business center of Hopewell and is presently the center of government, banking and retail and professional firms. The CBD is connected to areas beyond Hopewell's city limits by State primary Routes 36 and 10, although Route 36 is diverted from the core of the CBD along South Sixth Avenue. The CBD is connected to the internal street network and thus to the residential neighborhoods of Hopewell by several arterial streets that radiate into the community. The area has been weakened as a retail center by the establishment of competitive shopping centers both within and beyond the city limits.
- The 295-Oaklawn Intersection serves a dual function as a commercial resource for transients as well as a local shopping resource for residents. This area was stimulated by the presence of Interstate 295 whose intersection with Route 36 provides the closest linkage with the Interstate System and in a sense provides many visitors with their first glimpse of Hopewell. Located here are several chain motels and restaurants (which also bring added dollars to the community) along with local shopping facilities. Most of the land within this area has already been developed.

b. Community Commercial Facilities

These are predominantly retail centers that provide large parking areas and contain a mixture of retail stores. Anchor stores (those that draw most shoppers to the shopping center) for larger community centers are usually department store(s) but many are anchored with major chain grocery stores and/or drug stores or some combination thereof. Community commercial facilities are usually within easy driving range of the residential communities which they are intended to serve. Community shopping facilities in Hopewell include:

- The Cavalier Square Shopping Center is the only “pure” community shopping center in Hopewell. More than 30 years ago, this was the major retail center in Hopewell outside the CBD, but like the CBD, it has been affected by the growth of even newer shopping centers to the south along Route 36, both inside and outside the City.
- The 295-Oaklawn Complex has been described as part of the development around Interstate 295. This area contains two smaller shopping centers which function as community retail resources. Opportunities to add more similar facilities at this location, however, are unlikely within the City’s corporate limits because of the shortage of developable land within the city limits.

c. Neighborhood Commercial Facilities

Neighborhood commercial facilities should be located at key intersections and in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. Although much of the trade for these facilities may be “walk-in”, they should also be accessible via automobile and provide adequate parking. Under ideal conditions these facilities are small retail and service hubs where commercial zoning and land uses would be concentrated. But in Hopewell the neighborhood commercial facilities take on more of a linear dimension because of a long-established pattern of development. Existing commercial development of the “neighborhood service” type stretches almost continuously along the frontage of S. 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue from City Point Road to the Cavalier Square Shopping Center. The stretch of Route 36 along Oaklawn Boulevard from Cavalier Square to the 295/Oaklawn complex is spotted with a mixture of retail, fast-food restaurants and service uses. While the Land Use Plan recognizes the linear nature of much of the neighborhood commercial



development, as a long-range strategy it identifies selected intersections as the preferred location for concentrating these types of local service commercial places.

### **3. Residential Areas:**

This category of land use occupies most of the land area within the City. It consists primarily of single-family detached housing, but the general areas outlined as residential also accommodate a limited number of other dwelling types such as duplexes, town houses, condominiums and rental apartment projects. Residential areas include, by definition, uses that are customarily accessory to and incidental to residential uses. In addition, certain community service facilities that provide a direct public or quasi-public service to residential areas are also regarded as being compatible with residential areas. In this category are elementary schools, some day care centers, community centers, branch public offices, and like uses which may ordinarily be considered as necessary to service the residential areas.

The residential category also included other residential styles such as apartment projects and planned unit developments. The Land Use Plan does not designate specific areas for higher density projects or properties which are presently zoned for higher residential densities. Future areas for higher density would be established on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration existing development, community need, neighborhood conditions, and other criteria. In general, "compatibility with surrounding development" is the principal guideline for establishing higher density projects. Compatibility is normally interpreted to mean that the intended use or uses would promote the stability of the neighborhood.

It is the policy of the City to establish zoning for higher density areas based on the needs of the City for each type of housing. The use of planned unit developments is encouraged as well as other types of housing which promote the goal of more home ownership. Projects of higher densities may be dispersed throughout the City in appropriate locations that do not degrade the character and quality of established neighborhoods.

#### **4. Public Areas:**

Public areas shown on the Land Use Plan include a variety of public uses ranging from the City Hall site to the now-closed landfill site<sup>2</sup>. In general, the public areas on the Land Use Plan are larger facilities or lands owned by the City. Smaller lands occupying less than a city block are not shown; these smaller uses in most cases are included within other land use categories as supporting uses to those areas. Semi-public uses such as churches and private clubs are not shown as public land uses, although many of these facilities serve a type of public purpose.

### **D. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES OF THE LAND USE PLAN**

#### **1. Industrial Area:**

The industrial area occupies the eastern part of the City and is bounded generally by the Norfolk and Western Railroad, Cattail Creek and Baileys Creek. It is well-defined and appropriately separated from the residential portions of the community. All of the major industries of the City are located within this area. Some isolated sites are occupied by residential or commercial uses but the predominant land use throughout the area is industrial. Vacant land available for additional development is limited to approximately 150 acres in nine parcels which range in size from two to 32 acres. While there is additional vacant land in the area, some of it is held by existing industries for their own expansion. This, as a practical matter, takes it off the market. In addition, a very large area lies within the Flood Zones or the Chesapeake Bay RMA/RPA areas.<sup>3</sup>

The Land Use Plan recognizes the importance of industry to the City and particularly the existing industries. Having a more diversified reservoir of industrial sites that would accommodate smaller businesses and industries would also enhance Hopewell's industrial growth potential. An objective of the comprehensive plan is to strengthen and diversify the employment base of the community. One way of promoting this objective is in the establishment of an industrial park

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Chapter 4 for a more complete discussion of public areas.

<sup>3</sup> Comprehensive Plan, Vacant Land Analysis, 1991.

which contains a variety of industrial and business sites. Recommended Planning Strategies and Policies for future industrial development of the City are as follows:

- The City of Hopewell supports existing industries' efforts to provide for future expansion through the preservation of adequate land which is properly zoned for industrial purposes.
- It is the policy of the City to create a favorable economic environment for establishing new businesses and industries through the establishment of an industrial/business park.
- The City encourages the reuse of existing vacant commercial facilities as sites for establishing new businesses within the City.

## 2. City Urban Core:

The second area of concern is the older portion of the City, most of which was established during the first half of this century and consists of the original business and residential center of Hopewell. This area is designated for planning purposes as the "Urban Core". It includes the central business district (CBD), the commercial strips that follow state highways, the historic area around City Point, and the older residential areas which were mostly in place by 1950. Overall, this "City Urban Core" extends from the industrial area to a line that runs approximately north and south in the vicinity of Mesa Drive and is bordered on the south approximately by Court House Road.

The urban core was almost fully developed by the end of the 1950s and physically it has changed very little since then. The area is typical of the land development styles found in most of the older Virginia cities in that almost all of the property was platted as 25-foot lots. Typical building sites were created by assembling multiple lots, although many homes were constructed on a single lot. This "narrow lot" style of the earlier development produced a very compact city with little open space for public use and facilities. Future opportunities for additional growth within this part of the City must rely on a three-part approach involving *infilling* using existing vacant lots, *replacement* of existing buildings with new uses and *upgrading* existing buildings to modern standards. Development Policies and Strategies for the Urban Core are offered below.

(a). Residential areas in the Urban Core

Residential uses comprise the dominant use pattern of the Urban Core since this area contains most of the housing that was developed in the early history of the City. The 1960 census reported a population of 17,895 for Hopewell. Most of this population would have lived within the Urban Core because at that time the perimeter had not been annexed to the City (see Figure 1.1). The 1970 Census reported that 5,519 housing units were constructed before 1960, of which 2,555 were constructed prior to 1940.

Existing zoning within the Urban Core is a mixture of different kinds of residential and commercial zoning. R-2 zoning dominates the area comprising approximately one half of the total area. This is a moderate-density residential district, primarily for single-family dwellings but it can also accommodate duplexes with a lot area of 10,500 square feet. A substantial amount of R-3 zoning which permits apartments at town house densities (approximately 10 per acre) is also found in parts of this area.

Development policies and strategies for residential areas within the Urban Core follow the general model previously stated of upgrading, replacing and infilling. The focus is on a diversified program designed to upgrade existing housing by: (1) upgrading existing housing that is sound but which may need major maintenance; (2) replacing some housing units which are deteriorated beyond restoration; and (3) construction of new housing units where practicable on remaining vacant lots, including lots that become available when buildings are removed. This would assist in meeting a major need in Hopewell which is to increase the amount of housing available for purchase by local citizens. This program could be implemented through a combination of adjustments to zoning regulations and use of various financial incentives, some of which are already in place in Hopewell.

- The first strategy should be to conserve existing neighborhoods of quality housing. This can be encouraged through effective administration of codes and by incentives to promote good maintenance of properties. In this respect it is the policy of the City to encourage and promote the production of housing intended for owner occupancy.

- Upgrading is an effective tool where existing buildings are sound and have a substantial life expectancy. This is especially effective within historic areas where there is a measure of architectural control over the quality of improvements that are made to housing units. The City's program (applicable to any area) of waiving taxes on improvements made to older buildings provides an incentive to upgrading many older housing units within the City.
- Replacement offers an additional possibility for increasing development opportunities but in replacing older structures, it is often preferred by the owner to increase the productivity of a site by changing its use. With careful design, some use changes can be accomplished but others may result in a change in the character of the block or neighborhood. The City's policy should be to use replacement as a means of upgrading residential neighborhoods.
- Infilling using existing vacant lots is a straightforward method of effecting improvements to a neighborhood provided the added features are consistent and compatible with the character of the neighborhood in which it is located. The City's goal is to provide maximum flexibility in "infill" situations by relaxing the strict requirements of zoning as to lot area and other dimensions, providing that the overall character of the neighborhood in which construction is established is not diminished.
- Combining infilling and replacement involves starting with one or more parcels that may or may not contain buildings and to that or those parcels add additional land to assemble a larger parcel upon which a major project, such as a housing complex, may be constructed. It is the policy of the City to encourage this type of development by establishing density bonuses and other incentives for superior design quality and innovative housing concepts which promote the objectives of the comprehensive plan.
- Within its resources, the City also intends to continue to upgrade the infrastructure of the older neighborhoods where practicable.
- Within any historic district provide information to property owners on the income tax credits that are available through the federal and state governments which can offset up to half of the cost of rehabilitating certain historic buildings.

(b). Central Business District

The CBD is divided by Randolph Road into two separate but interrelated commercial areas. The part that is located east of Randolph Road is mostly a retail area that in recent years has seen major migration of its businesses to commercial areas outside the CBD, particularly to shopping centers and sites near Interstate connections. The CBD has a

fairly large employment base in government offices, private offices, and commercial establishments. This provides a basic strength to support some commercial enterprises but recent development around the interchanges of I-295 at Route 36 increased the CBD's difficulty of competing with sites near these and other major traffic hubs.

A good prospect for maintaining the CBD-East is with small shops and restaurants that can be supported by the employment base within and near the CBD. The western portion of the CBD appears to be stable as the office complex of the City. The city hall and court facilities, as well as several commercial office buildings and banks, provides a stable employment base within the CBD.

**Figure 3.3**  
**CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, HOPEWELL, VIRGINIA**



The CBD is included in Hopewell's Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) which provides considerable financial incentives for firms that move into the area and meet the required criteria. Typical incentives that apply to the UEZ included the following:

- Land owned by the City may be sold at below-market rates
- Fees for permits including sewer tap fees and zoning fees may be waived

- Utility tax and BPOL licenses may be reduced for four years
- Rebates up to \$1,000 for facade or other improvements to buildings and sites

The City is also considering placing the CBD in a Historic District and if this occurs it will open up opportunities to receive federal and state income tax rebates.

Future development objectives for the CBD should include creating an environment to enhance the area's attractiveness to small businesses, restaurants, offices and retail facilities. The potential for new offices, particularly medical and law offices, is enhanced by the proximity of the CBD to the hospital and courthouse. With incentives available through Enterprise Zone programs and, if established, an historic district, the potential for expanding both employment and commercial opportunities within this district are favorable. Policies and strategies that could help bring this about are as follows:

- It is the policy of the City of Hopewell to provide an overall program of support for businesses within the CBD through a variety of city programs and services. Examples: continued protection; improved pedestrian circulation; and upgrading of the infrastructure.
- The City's strategy includes encouraging and, in appropriate cases, assisting new businesses to be established and existing businesses to remain in the CBD through providing financial incentives through the Urban Enterprise Zone, and other incentives available under state or federal laws.
- It is the intent of the City to maintain its major public offices within the CBD thus contributing to high daytime employment to support restaurants, retail shops, and professional offices.
- The City intends to initiate a comprehensive study of the CBD designed to address economic, physical and functional needs of the area. This study should focus on, but not be limited to, market analysis, infrastructure, traffic and parking, facade improvement, streetscaping and the like.
- Consideration will be given to creating a special office/professional zoning district near the City offices and hospital to encourage the development of medical and professional offices and other support services

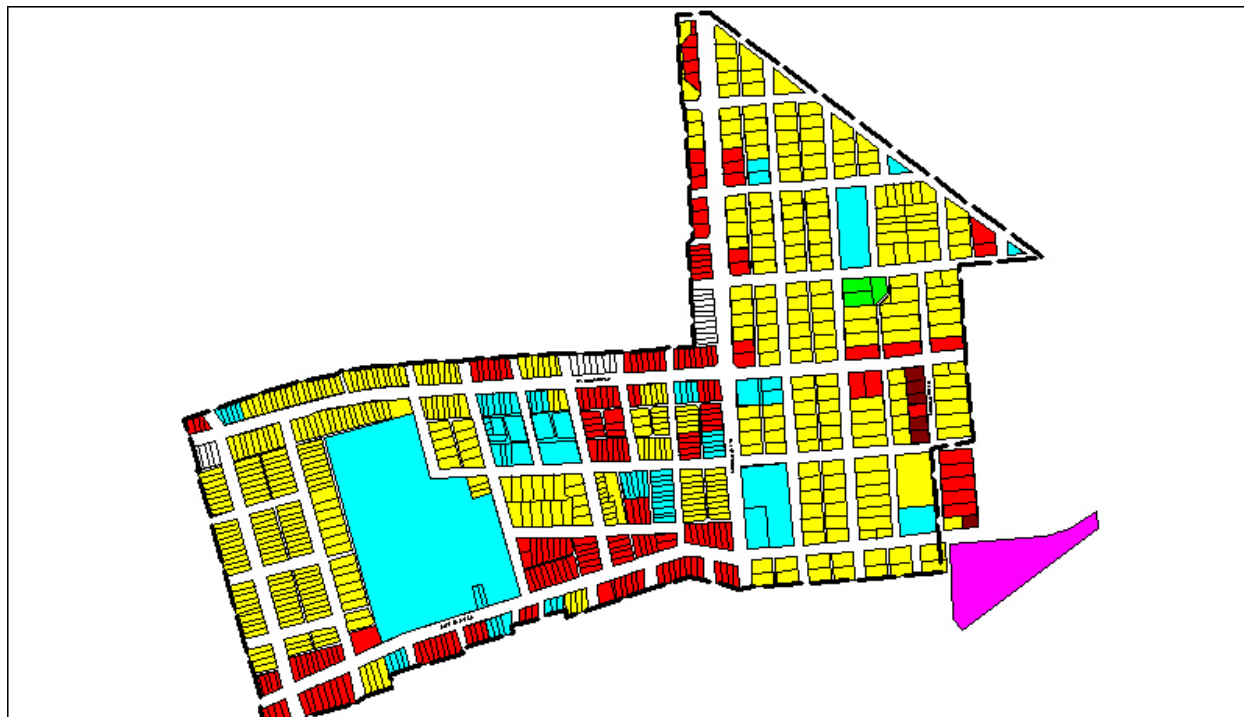
(c) Third to 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor

This corridor lies to the west of the Central Business District and covers a large area delineated generally by North Third Avenue, Randolph Road, North Sixth Avenue, West Broadway, North Fifteenth Avenue and West City Point Road (see Figure 3.4). It contains a wide variety of residential, commercial and public activities.

The dominant residential area within the corridor is an area that has been known as the “B Village” which covered that entire portion of the corridor east of North Sixth Avenue. Originally a residential community of about 200 single-family homes of like design, the area is still predominantly residential but is experiencing considerable conversion to other uses. In many of these conversions the original building has been replaced with new commercial buildings although some residential buildings, with and without upgrading, have been converted to offices or other commercial uses. Conversions have been concentrated near the CBD and along the well traveled roads of North Sixth Avenue, West Broadway and West City Point Road. North Sixth Avenue is the location of several recently established professional office buildings.

Figure 3.4

THIRD TO FIFTEENTH AVENUE CORRIDOR  
LAND USE





There is a mixture of older and newer commercial development along West Broadway and West City Point Road, the two main arterial streets connecting the CBD to the major residential areas of the City. Some of the businesses were likely established because State Route 36, the main highway between Hopewell and Petersburg, is routed along West Broadway and South 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Today, most of the businesses along these two streets are either peripheral to the CBD or serve neighborhood functions. Interstate 295 has removed most of the through traffic from these local streets.

There are a number of public facilities located in or adjacent to this Corridor. Just outside the corridor on City Point Road, is the City's outstanding community center that offers a full range of indoor recreation to the public. The former Mallonee School located between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues offers a large building on a 12-acre site and is under consideration for a number of different uses. The 3<sup>1/2</sup> Street Playground, a public park more than an acre in size with playground equipment, is located on North 3<sup>1/2</sup> Avenue between West Cawson and Davis Streets.

While the development of detailed planning strategies for dealing with the future of this corridor requires in-depth studies that go beyond the general comprehensive plan, several policies that have already been expressed for residential areas and the CBD may be applicable to the area.

- The area of the original "B" Village should be explored with the view that it may offer more opportunity for improvement in housing than the present village provides. What conversion that is presently going on within the village is mostly commercial and that is occurring because it is economically feasible to replace dwelling buildings with commercial buildings. If it were possible to replace existing single-family dwellings with dwellings at a higher density, then conversion of the village into a residential community with full amenities may be feasible.
- For the residential area west of the old high school, the strategies offered for residential areas should be appropriate. They focus on upgrading sound residential buildings, replacing those that are seriously deteriorated or functionally obsolete and infilling with appropriate residential or other development compatible with residential communities.
- For the commercial areas, the focus should be on confining development to areas of existing commercial concentration and redefining the zoning districts to reflect existing patterns. Planned expansion of commercial facilities should be on a case by

case basis with proper attention being given to site plans, parking and in general the compatibility of a business with the neighborhood.

- The extension of the Enterprise Zone may also be explored as a means of offering incentives to existing businesses to upgrade their facilities.
- A comprehensive master plan of this area is needed in order to identify in more detail the planning issues, constraints, opportunities and options for improving the function of this area within the context of the overall city plan. The plan should address in detail (1) the most appropriate use of land; (2) potential for conversion of existing uses to uses that fit the goals of the plan; (3) circulation, both vehicular and pedestrian and the best use of public lands and facilities.

(d) Route 36 Commercial Corridor

The older commercial strips that extend along Route 36 from the CBD to the developing area near I-295 present both potential and limitations to further development. The Zoning within the strip is largely of two classes – B-3 Highway Commercial and B-4 Corridor Development. The highway commercial district is intended to provide for a wide variety of commercial uses along major highways. The corridor development district was designed especially for the Oaklawn-Woodlawn Corridor Development; it extends from Roanoke Avenue to the commercial area around the I-295 interchange. There are three types of areas within this Corridor.

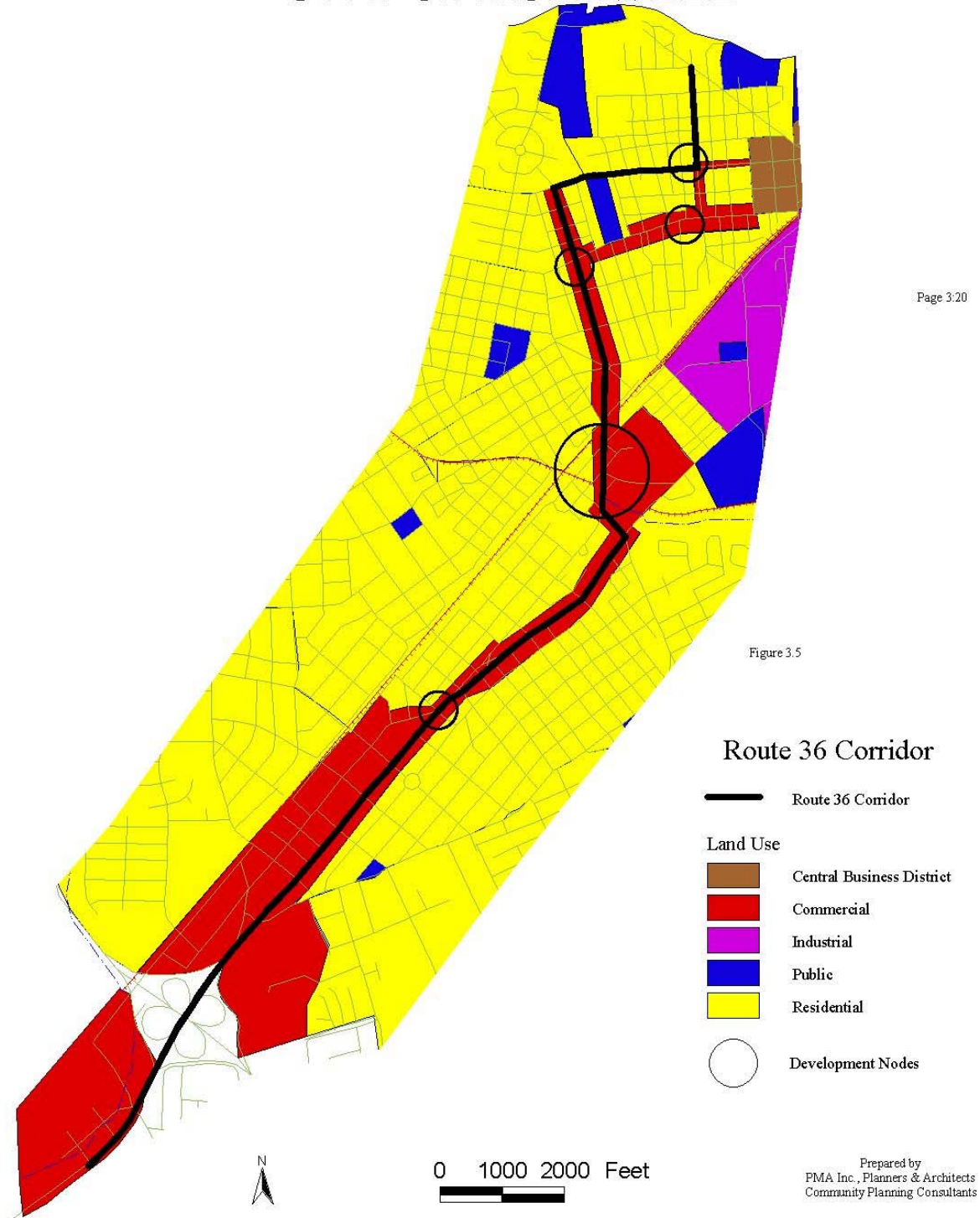
- 1) The Cavalier Square Shopping Center qualifies as a Community shopping area as defined in a previous section. It is centrally located within Hopewell and is within convenient driving distance of the entire city.
- 2) The Route 36 strip between West City Point Road and Cavalier Square is, as a practical matter, fully developed with a combination of neighborhood retail and commercial service establishments.
- 3) From Cavalier Square to the 295-Oaklawn Complex development is a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Commercial development is a combination of neighborhood service and highway service establishments. Although the potential for developing a major commercial hub in this stretch of road is limited by the unavailability of sufficiently large parcels, one location that is a candidate for being named a neighborhood hub is where Route 36 intersects with Miles Avenue near the “scissors” crossover from Winston Churchill Boulevard to Oaklawn Boulevard.

The objective for development along and within these older commercial strips should be to promote the kinds of development that reuses the land in a way that best serves the needs of the

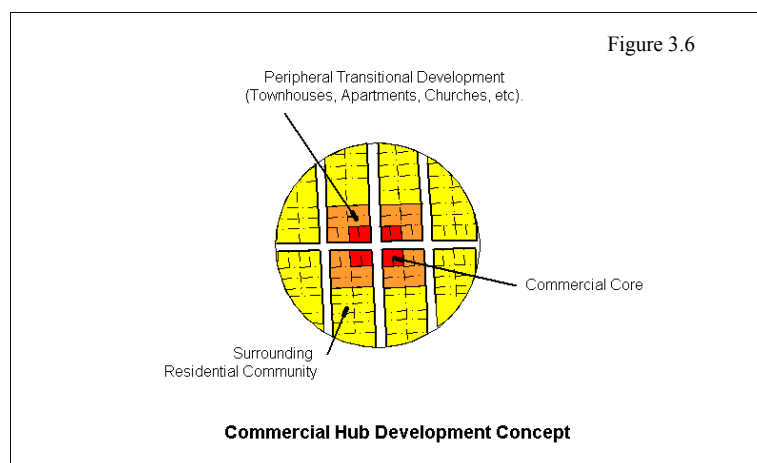
community. Focus should be on concentrating development at key intersections as neighborhood service hubs. Some revision in the existing traffic patterns may help make land available as an incentive to encourage concentrated rather than linear development. Zoning can also be used as an incentive to promote the kind of desired development. For example, to promote new development as opposed to converting an existing building, the requirements for buildings might be relaxed by increasing the buildable area or allowing greater heights and/or other types of incentives in exchange for development that assembles land and enhances the function and appearance of the commercial areas. Planning Strategies and Policies for the Route 36 Corridor are as follows:

- It is a priority of the City to develop a “Route 36 Enhancement Plan” prepared as an attachment to the comprehensive plan. This plan should be based on a detailed study of the highway commercial frontage within the greater commercial corridor between the CBD and the I-295 commercial complex. It’s objective should be to enhance the appearance and function of the corridor by working toward establishing neighborhood commercial hubs and improving the function and appearance of the corridor. In addition, it should identify methods of improving the visibility of existing shopping centers. Both Cavalier Square and Colonial Corner shopping centers have limited visibility from main approach streets which, if enhanced, should improve the function of these centers.
- The City encourages the use of vacant lots within the commercial strips to be used for new commercial uses or new multiple-family dwellings. Where practicable multiple lots should be assembled to provide sites to accommodate the principal uses plus parking and other site improvements.
- It is the objective of the City to promote the establishment of neighborhood commercial areas at strategic cross streets where they provide maximum service to residential neighborhoods.
- Promote the maintenance of existing businesses and their upgrading and encourage new businesses to upgrade existing buildings.
- New multiple-family uses such as for-sale townhouses are preferred as the means of transitioning between the highway strip-commercial frontages and the residential communities that lie behind. The conversion of older homes into multiple rental apartments is highly discouraged.
- Existing buildings that remain in service as residential or commercial will be monitored under the City’s code enforcement program to ensure that they are maintained in compliance with applicable codes.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF HOPEWELL



- Revisit the Zoning Ordinance and reexamine the appropriateness of zoning regulations that apply in these commercial districts. Investigate methods that provide additional development rights where land is assembled and buildings replaced in accordance with the objectives of the land use plan for this area.
- Develop signage that directs traffic between I-295 and the CBD via the better roads of South Sixth Street and Winston Churchill Boulevard instead of the portion of Route 36 which follows South 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West City Point Road.
- Promote development of commercial nodes at key intersections. Developing these nodes could help to reduce strip development along main thoroughfares. It could also help to reduce automobile trips if the nodes are sufficiently developed and designed to promote pedestrian flows.



## 2. Perimeter:

### (a). Residential development

The second area to be addressed in the land use plan is that part of the City that lies south and west of the City's Urban Core. It is the area referred to for purposes of the Land Use Plan as the "Perimeter". It is within this area that most of the opportunity for additional residential development is likely to occur. The area also contains the commercial complex that has recently developed around the Interstate 295 interchange. Nearly all of the vacant land that is in large enough parcels to support major residential development, such as planned unit developments, is located in the western portion of Hopewell within this perimeter. Several recent developments illustrate that this area still offers an opportunity to add to the housing supply of the City. Cobblestone Subdivision, located off Cedar Level

Road added 111 new subdivision lots and Lincoln Square located off Delrose Drive added 29 new lots. Thirty-two lots were also added with the completion of Jamestown Drive. These examples illustrate how pockets of vacant land can be converted into subdivisions.

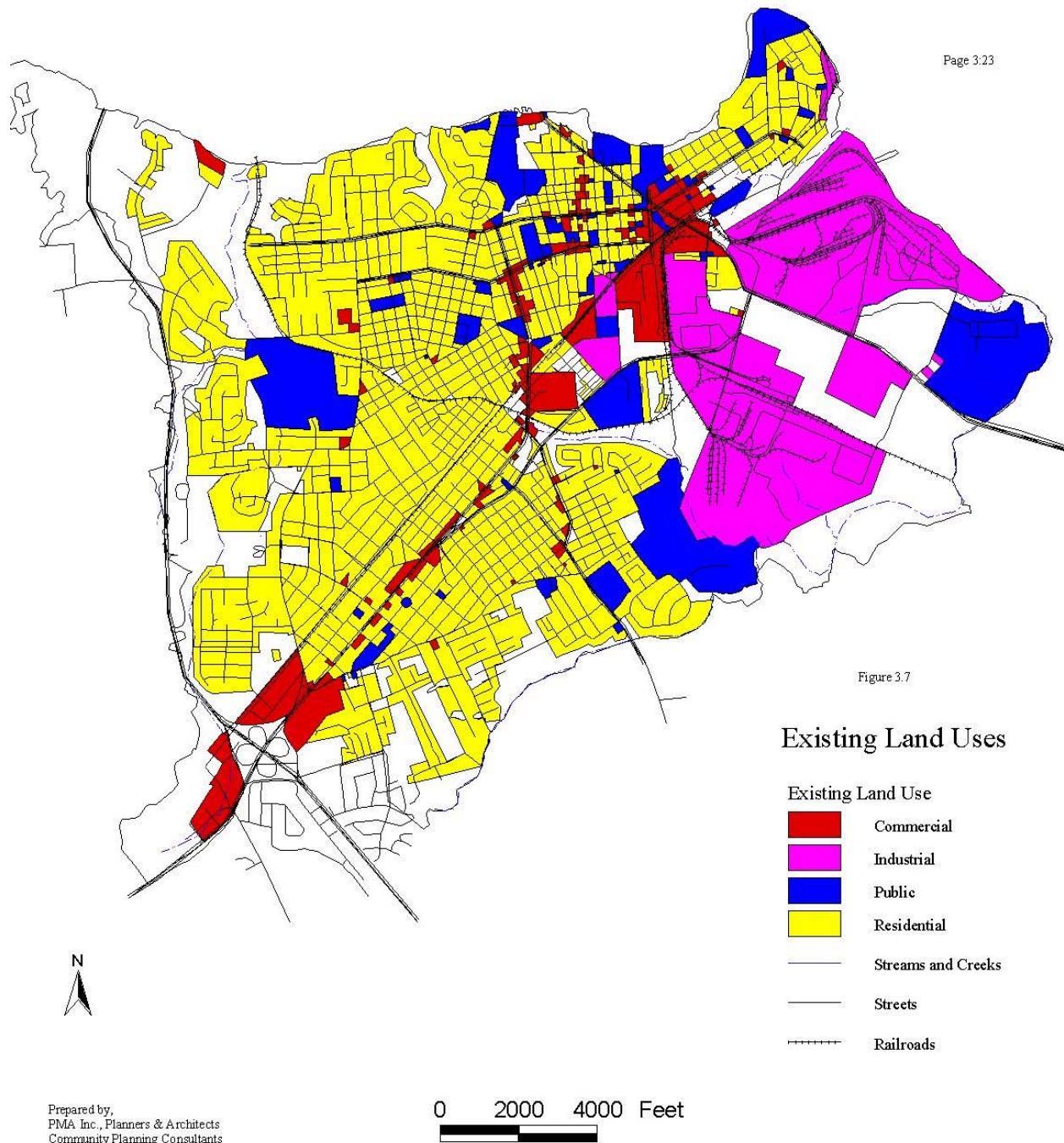
The existing land use map (Figure 3.7) illustrates where the major concentrations of vacant land lie in this part of the City, but despite the apparent availability of vacant land, there are many constraints to its use, including multiple ownership, rough terrain, and Chesapeake Bay regulations. (see several maps in Chapter 1). Most of the residential land within the perimeter is zoned for low to medium density residential. About half of the area is in the R-2 zoning district which permits single-family dwellings on 7,500 square-foot lots or duplexes on lots of 10,500 square feet. The remaining half is in single-family zones R1 and R1-A which require lots having a minimum of 12,000 and 10,000 square feet respectively. There are isolated pockets of R-4 zoning that permits about 16-18 apartments per acre, three of which are established as planned unit developments.

It is the strategy of the Land Use Plan to see this perimeter developed to its most efficient level in future years, without repeating some of the past conditions which are now limiting development. Strategies for future residential development within the perimeter should focus on superior management of existing resources. This strategy is necessitated by the complexity of conditions within the area ranging from protected lands to other lands, though not protected, that have severe development limitations because of slope, size and shape, land assembly or access problems. While it is still possible to develop a few conventional subdivisions within the area, the major planning strategy for this area should be focused on providing a regulatory and administrative framework that enables more creative and innovative development techniques. Accordingly, the following policies and/or strategies are intended to promote this purpose.

- The land use policy for residential development is to promote the use of well-planned development for the new residential development in order to achieve the most efficient use of remaining vacant land.
- Density and design incentives are promoted to enable developers to compensate for additional development and/or land assembly costs associated with difficult



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development situations. The City encourages residential builders to assemble several lots to achieve well-organized site planning

- Planned Unit Development (PUD) – which is already in place as Article 8 of the Zoning Ordinance is the principal tool for managing development within this area. It should be expanded to allow “environmental cluster subdivisions.” The statement of intent of that article at present states in part as follows.

*“the district is intended to permit development in accordance with a master plan of cluster type communities under one ownership or control. Within such communities the location of all improvements shall be controlled in such a manner as to permit a variety of housing accommodations in an orderly relationship to one another with the greatest amount of open area and the least disturbance to natural features.”*

Under the present PUD regulations, each PUD is required to have a certain amount of open space established for the recreational use of the occupants and operated under an “owners association.” This type of “conventional” PUD provides an important tool in land use management and should be continued. But what is needed for this perimeter area is a new type of PUD, one that sets a high value on preserving environmentally-sensitive open space.

**Accordingly, Article 8 of the Zoning Ordinance would be amended to extend the PUD concept to enable “environmental cluster subdivision (PUDS)” to be established under careful site plan controls. Under this concept, selected environmentally sensitive areas that are appropriately protected would count as part of the land area for density calculations.<sup>4</sup>**

- Density Bonuses should be allowed in subdivisions or housing developments where multiple parcels must be assembled in order to develop a PUD or cluster subdivision, or in appropriate cases apartment projects. This would promote infill development in areas where multiple lot ownership has made it difficult to assemble enough land to construct housing consistent with the market needs.

(b). Commercial Development near I-295 and Oaklawn Ave.

Most of the recent commercial development within Hopewell has occurred in the vicinity of the I-295/Oaklawn intersection. The current zoning is B-3 which is designed for highway commercial uses and permits a large variety of commercial and service uses.

While the interchange stimulated the market for restaurants, motels and retail shopping

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<sup>4</sup> An example: The situation: One has 20 total acres and 12 acres are in the RPA and eight are suitable for development. The zoning is R-2 that requires 7,500 square feet for a single-family dwelling or 10,500 for a two-family dwelling. Using only the 8 acres and 7,500 square foot lots, one could expect to get about 35 subdivision lots. If half of the RPA could be used as credit for development on the remaining eight acres then the number of permitted dwellings would increase to about 50 units. The Density for the developed portion would rise to about six units per acre and part of the units might be townhouses, duplexes or quadraplexes.



areas, the design of the structure itself resulted in two problems. The first was that it occupies about 100 acres of land that was in a prime commercial zone before the Interstate came to the area. Second, it left the remaining commercial frontage with a major access problem which compounds traffic circulation problems in the area. What are needed to improve the function of the area are better traffic patterns to enable potential shoppers to find access to the businesses of their choice. This may not be a problem for one who uses the area on a regular basis but it is a serious problem for one arriving off the interstate with no familiarity with the situation. In addition to the access issue, this commercial area has a visibility problem. The Colonial Corner shopping center is nearly hidden by buildings and structures that have been established along the road frontage. This combined with the access limitations does not make the area more attractive as a business area in comparison with the newer facilities at the Crossings, and if one drives a little further on, Temple Avenue.

The overall strategy for this area is to make it more accessible and visible. In order to achieve this goal the following policies and actions are advised.

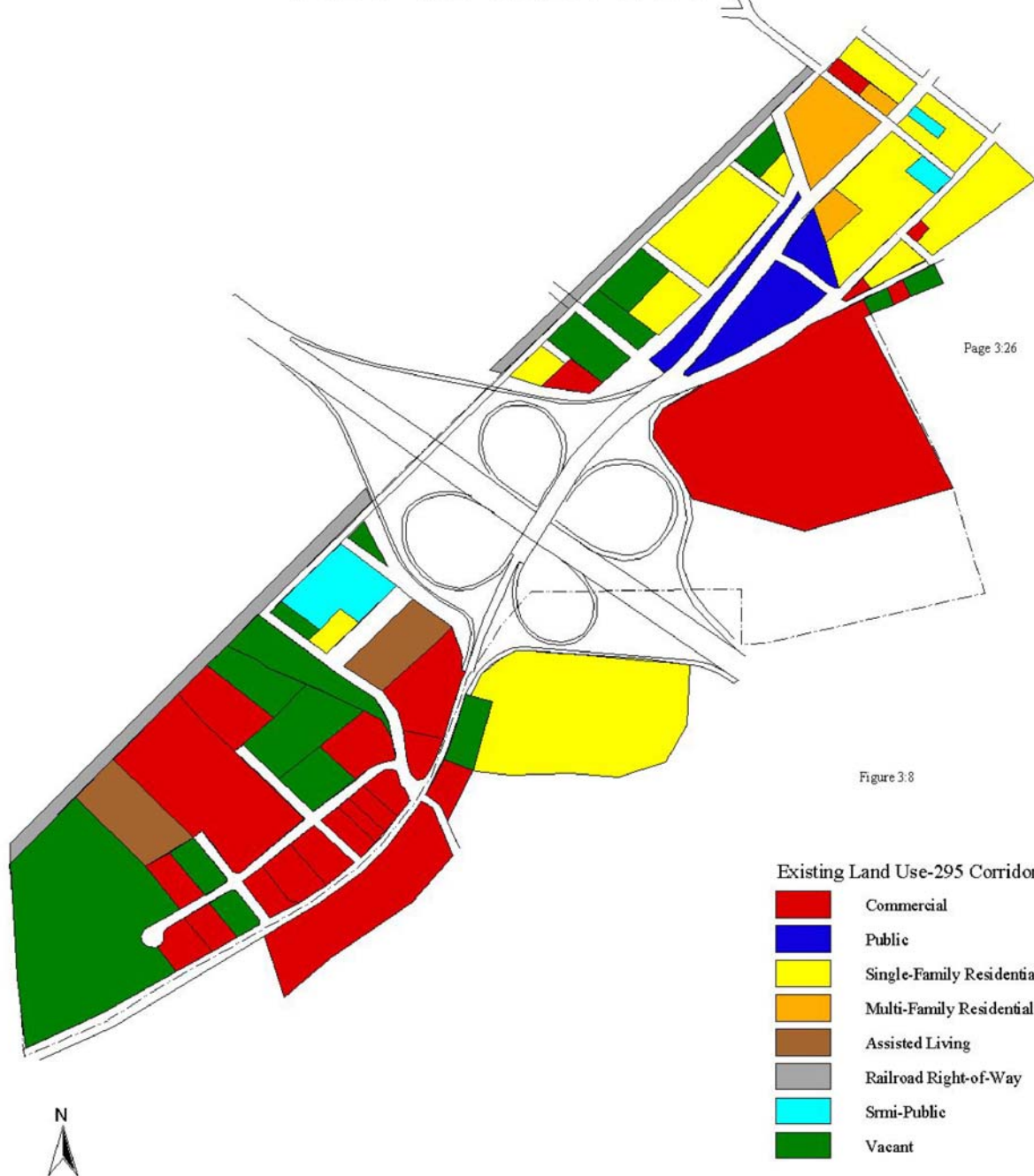
- A Master Plan should be developed for the area to address problems of access and visibility.
- Prepare a guide map that may be used by the tourist center to help visitors locate specific businesses and identify the services they offer.
- Establish more detailed standards to guide development of new facilities utilizing zoning regulations and site plan reviews to implement the standards.

#### **4. Other Important Areas**

##### **a. Historic Areas**

According the statement of intent, the Historic District as established in Article XIV of the Zoning Ordinance is designed to “*bring attention to the architectural excellence and*

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*historic importance of certain buildings, structures, places and areas of the city.”* While the Historic District as defined could be applied to any area of the city where conditions merit historic designation, in its current application the district applies only to the “City Point” community including the designated area of the national battlefield. The district is administered as an overlay zone; that is, it supplements the regulations of an underlying principal zoning district. The regulations focus primarily on the external architectural appearance of buildings with the purpose of maintaining the historic appearance of the neighborhood.

There are economic incentives in the form of tax relief for persons willing to invest in certain renovations. Federal income tax credits of 20 percent may be received for improvements to buildings where the end use is income-producing when the facility is located within a historic district. A 10 percent credit is applicable for non-historic buildings that were built before 1936. In addition to federal credits, Virginia permits a 25 percent state income tax credit for rehabilitating historic buildings. In both cases, the improvements to buildings must be consistent with federal guidelines. Federal and state income credits may also be combined with enterprise zone benefits to establish an attractive package of incentives for new businesses while at the same time preserving the historic features of a community.

Consideration is being given to establishing parts of the Central Business District as an historic area. Should this occur, it would open up an opportunity for pumping new life into this district, since the CBD is already located in the enterprise zone.

Policies for the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic areas of Hopewell include the following:

- Establish an Historic District within the traditional Central Business District of the City.
- Promote the use of financial incentives for the rehabilitation of qualifying historic structures.
- Utilize VDHR programs to identify other significant historic resources within the City.

b. Conservation and Protected Areas

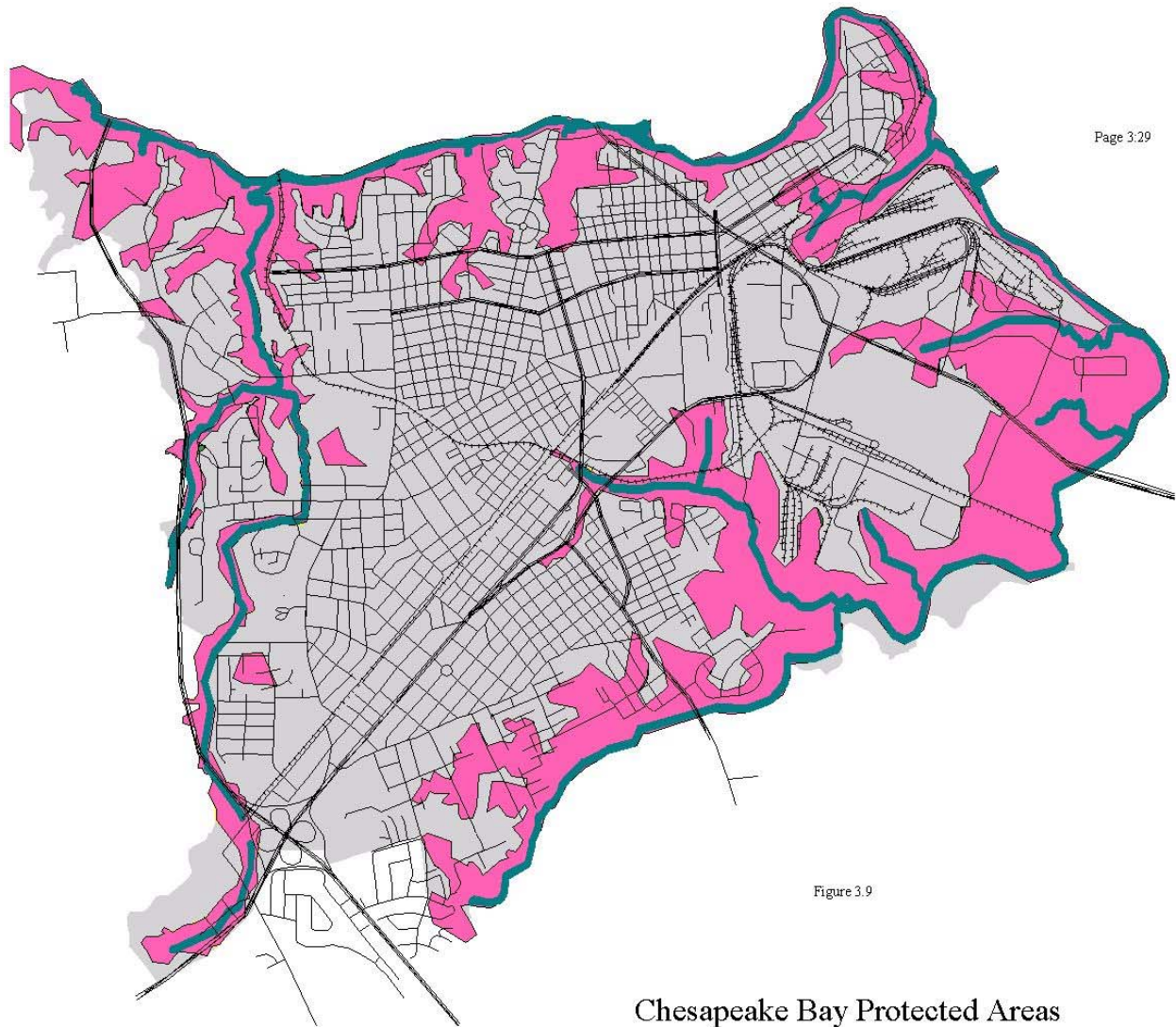
This topic essentially is addressed by the Chesapeake Bay Regulations. Article XV-A of the Zoning Ordinance establishes a Resource Protection Area (RPA) and a Resource Management Area (RMA). These two areas are depicted on Figure 1.6 in Chapter 1 (which is included here for reference purposes). The RPA, the most restrictive of the two areas, consists of tidal wetlands; nontidal wetlands connected by surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or tributary streams; tidal shores and a 100-foot buffer located adjacent to and landward of any of the components listed above. In other words, this area is strictly a conservation and preservation area with the exception that only water-related uses may be established.

The RMA has more flexibility in that any use that may ordinarily be used within the applicable zoning district may be used in the RPA with certain conditions. This area includes the following: areas within the 100-year floodplain; streamside steep slopes; and nontidal wetlands not included in the RPA. Figure 1.6 also shows the areas covered by conditions that qualify as Resource Management Areas as determined by soil conditions, flood plain data and topographic data. It accounts for areas all along the shorelines of Hopewell and penetrates into the major creeks, especially Cattail Creek, Baileys Creek and Cabin Creek. Much of the RMA is already developed. Two areas, both within the area shown on Figure 1.6 - one around the wastewater treatment plant and another around a former land fill - are designated as Conservation Areas on the City's zoning map.



Policies for the protection and development of these sensitive areas include:

- Continue to use the standards of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District (Article XV-A, Zoning) and the Flood Plain Overlay District (Article XV) for development within these areas.
- Delineate the specific boundaries of the Resource Management Area and update as necessary.
- Delineation of the Chesapeake Bay Areas needs to be included as site plan requirements in the zoning ordinance.

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## Chesapeake Bay Protected Areas

-  Resource Protection Area
-  Resource Management Area



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